

feet above the street level, is presently to arise. Several other high buildings, soaring far above the existing skyline and capable of housing, each one, fair-sized cities, are being seriously considered.

When the imagination is allowed to play, picturesque possibilities are discovered. One is the city of multiple streets. If there were street levels enough, every plot could have its skyscraper and children could be born, go to school, rear a family and die without ever setting foot on the ground. Another type of future metropolis is that which LE CORBUSIER has described in his "City of Tomorrow." His plan is to produce a beautiful and spacious metropolis by the comparatively simple expedient of building practically nothing but skyscrapers, leaving abundant room between them for parks, gardens and princely thoroughfares. It is obviously a human conception, since it recognizes the fact that man is a land animal, with an occasional longing to get his fingers in the dirt. In LE CORBUSIER's metropolis the citizen may rest from his toil by playing golf or tennis in his own back yard, skyline or no skyline. He may even contrive to raise a radish or two.

There was a time when one of our own most distinguished architects, Mr. HARVEY CORBETT, seemed to lean toward piling street on street and tower on tower. His recent article in THE TIMES indicates that he has seen another light. Perhaps he saw it all along and in his more imaginative moments was only fooling us. At any rate, he now points out that, what with the maximum size of plots, the cost of bracing the upper stories of great structures against wind pressure and some other technical considerations, it is probably impossible to make a paying enterprise out of more than eighty-five stories. An additional fifteen stories and a flagpole may be tacked on if one wishes to charge them to advertising, but they will not be directly profitable.

As the Regional Plan Committee has been at pains to point out, there is an abundance of room in and around Manhattan Island for all the people who are likely to settle or do business there for at least a generation to come. Tall buildings merely concentrate them in a relatively small area. But in this respect a one hundred-story building is no worse than five twenty-story buildings of the same thickness in the waist. If all Manhattan were built up to a uniform height of ten stories, our situation would be infinitely worse than if any conceivable number of hundred-story buildings were judiciously sprinkled over the island.

The truth thus seems to be that we can be as monumental as we like, provided we are willing to pay for it, and provided also that too many of us do not feel the monumental urge coming over us at the same time and spot. There is something to be said for an architecture which impresses by its very hugeness, though a building is not good merely because it is big. Skyscraper architecture, as an art form, is in its infancy. But in well-ordered communities it will evolve not as a desperate thrusting up of great masses of steel and cement but as a careful balancing of bulk and open spaces. Skyscrapers, to be at their best, demand a degree of isolation. Perhaps we can imagine them, in our city of the future, as rising stately and beautiful above humbler structures, as the sequoias of the California forests loom above the surrounding pines.

NOT QUITE TOPLESS TOWERS.

A new era of tall buildings which will make the Woolworth look like a wart upon the earth's surface is envisaged by some as in store for New York City. For sixteen years the tall structure near City Hall Park looked down on every other edifice. Now, with the completion of the Chrysler and Bank of the Manhattan buildings, it seems that Mr. GILBERT did not feed his offspring enough spinach. But the two new giants will not be supreme very long. On the site of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel a building of eighty-five stories, approximately 1,100